

Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram, I could not find any evidence of *crassicaudata*, but *pentadactyla* was common all over. This clearly indicates that the pangolins of northern Mymensingh, Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts are *pentadactyla* and not *crassicaudata*. The animals from west of Padma-Meghna rivers (the conspicuous zoo-geographic barrier in the region) are apparently *crassicaudata* as it has been recorded from the adjacent districts of West Bengal (Agrawal *et al.* 1992).

Khan (1985) mentions that *Hystrix indica* occurs widely and was earlier common in the entire country. But the photo accompanying his text was that of *H. brachyura* and certainly not *indica*. Here again, my field experience near the Indo-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram indicated that porcupines of northern Mymensingh, Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts are *brachyura* and not *indica*. Again the animals from west of Padma-Meghna rivers (the conspicuous zoo-geographic barrier in the region) are

apparently *indica* as it has been recorded from the adjacent districts of West Bengal (Agrawal *et al.* 1992).

These mistakes have been repeated in Islam *et al.* (2000). One reason for such mistakes was not seeing the specimens or not examining them critically, or simply relying upon local reports without cross-checking as is evident in some works in northeast India (Chatterjee 1989, Chetry *et al.* 2001, Singh *et al.* 1994). The camera-trap record of porcupines in Kaziranga (Karanth and Nichols 2000) was also of the Crestless Himalayan Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura* and not Indian Porcupine *Hystrix indica* as mentioned.

November 28, 2002

ANWARUDDIN CHOUDHURY

The Rhino Foundation for nature in NE India,  
C/o The Assam Co., Ltd., Bamunimaidam,  
Guwahati 781 021, Assam, India.  
Email: badru1@sancharnet.in

#### REFERENCES

- AGRAWAL, V., P. DAS, S. CHAKRABORTY, R. GHOSE, A. MANDAL, T. CHAKRABORTY, A. PODDAR, J. LAL, T. BHATTACHARYYA & M. GHOSH (1992): Mammalia. *In*: Fauna of West Bengal. State Fauna Series 3. Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta.
- CHATTERJEE, A.K. (1989): Survey of snow leopard and associated animals in Mouling National Park, East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh. *Arunachal Forest News* 7(1 & 2): 10-15.
- CHETRY, D., R. REDHI, BUJARBARUA & P.C. BHATTACHARJEE (2001): Mammals of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, India. *Tigerpaper* 28(4): 29-32.
- ISLAM, A., M. AMEEN & A. NISHAT (2000): Red book of threatened mammals of Bangladesh. IUCN Bangladesh. Dhaka.
- KARANTH, K.U. & J.D. NICHOLS (2000): Ecological status and conservation of tigers in India. Final Technical report to the Division of International Conservation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington DC and Wildlife Conservation Society, New York. Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore, India.
- KHAN, M.A.R. (1985): Mammals of Bangladesh - a field guide. Nazma Reza, Dhaka.
- SINGH, P., K. HARIDASAN, A. BORANG, B. BHATT, C. BOROOAH & M. BORAH (1994): Baseline survey of biodiversity in high priority biologically rich areas of Arunachal Pradesh - Tale Valley. Interim report to WWF-India, Itanagar.

#### 6. CAT SNAKE *BOIGA TRIGONATA* IN DIET OF JERDON'S BAZA *AVICEDA JERDONI*

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* is one of the least studied raptors in India. It is distributed in northern West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, North-eastern hill states, hills of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Eastern Ghats and Andhra Pradesh, and affects tropical moist-deciduous to broadleaved evergreen forest (Ali and Ripley 1983; Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Kazmierczak 2000). Its diet consists of lizards, frogs, grasshoppers, and other large insects (Ali and Ripley 1983; Grimmett *et al.* 1998), birds eggs (Grossman *et al.* 1965) and a record of a small snake (del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). Crabs, bats, mice, shrews and rarely birds are recorded in the diet of other equal sized bazas found in different parts of the world (Grossman *et al.* 1965).

During the study on the breeding of the Jerdon's Baza in Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal, two cat snakes *Boiga trigonata* were recorded along with its normal diet of insects, frogs and calotes lizards. The snakes, c. 50 cm long, were brought to the nest on different occasions during the third week of the nesting period. Adults fed small pieces of the snakes to the nestlings and consumed the thin tail portions

themselves. This observation indicates that snakes are probably a part of the Jerdon's Baza's regular diet.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for financial support, Bombay Natural History Society for giving us an opportunity to study in Buxa and Mr. N. Sivakumaran, Research Assistant, BNHS for suggestions on this note.

July 22, 2002

S. SIVAKUMAR

VIBHU PRAKASH<sup>1</sup>

Bombay Natural History Society  
Hornbill House, S.B. Singh Road,  
Mumbai 400 023, Maharashtra, India.  
<sup>1</sup>Present Address: BNHS Field Station,  
F-23, HMT Colony, Pinjore 134 101,  
District Panchkula, Haryana, India.

Email: jatayuprakash@sify.com

## REFERENCES

- ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1983): Compact Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- DEL HOYO, J., A. ELLIOTT & J. SARGATAL (EDS) (1994): Handbook of the Birds of the World. Vol. 2. New world vultures to Guineafowl. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- GRIMMETT, R., C. INSKIPP & T. INSKIPP (1998): Birds of the Indian subcontinent. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Pp. 888.
- GROSSMAN, M.L., S. GROSSMAN & J. HAMLET (1965): Birds of Prey of the World. Cassell & Company Ltd, London.
- KAZMIERCZAK, K. (2000): A Field Guide to the Birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Maldives. OM Book Service, New Delhi.

## 7. OCCURRENCE OF THE NORTHERN GOSHAWK *ACCIPITER GENTILIS* IN AND NEAR MYSORE, KARNATAKA

The Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* is considered a rare winter visitor to north India, straggling to Gujarat and Sind (Ali and Ripley 1987). It has been recorded from Bhavnagar (Dharmakumarsinhji 1954) and Hingolghadh (Khacher and Mundkur 1989) in Gujarat, Poona (Ingalhalikar *et al.* 1987) in Maharashtra and up to Bangalore, Karnataka (Prasad and Karthikeyan 1994) and Wynaad, Kerala (Zacharias and Gaston 1993) in south India.

A solitary male bird of this species was observed at Gujgegowdanapura (12° 5' N, 76° 31' E) on January 1, 2000 in an undulating, hilly area with patches of scrub forest, a eucalyptus plantation and several scattered trees of *Acacia nilotica*, *A. leucophloea*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Strychnos potatorum* and *Mangifera indica*. The location is roughly 22 km southwest of Mysore city (12° 18' N, 76° 33' E). The bird was seen resting at 1600 hrs in a cluster of *Acacia* trees at the border of a gram field close to Gujgegowdanapura lake. The large size, sooty black cap and face, distinct white supercilium, slaty grey upperparts and white underparts, finely barred black, readily identified the bird as a male *A. gentilis*.

Juveniles of this species were observed on two occasions at separate locations. The first of these sightings took place at Meenakshipura on the south bank of the Krishanarajasagara reservoir (12° 24' N, 76° 26' E), 24 km northwest of Mysore city, on January 8, 2000. A large *Accipiter* raptor was seen as it took off from a well-wooded area close to dry land cultivation. It was mostly brown in colour, with bold, dark, vertical streaks on dirty creamy-buff underparts and a barred tail. In flight, its rounded wings, mode

of flight and characteristic barring on the underwing identified it as a juvenile Northern Goshawk. The bird was observed in pursuit of a Black-naped Hare *Lepus nigricollis* across a short stretch of open field, and successively through a thick patch of *Cassia* sp. and *Pongamia glabra* trees lining a streambed. It successfully caught the hare after a masterly display of deft twisting, turning and ducking through the narrow path, matching and finally overcoming the hare's tactics in escape.

The second sighting of a juvenile was on February 30, 2001 at the foot of Chamundi hill in Mysore city. The bird was observed in a *Eucalyptus* grove bordering thick scrub vegetation of *Ziziphus jujuba*, *Z. oenoploea* and *Dichrostachys cinerea*. It was also observed in flight, and was constantly mobbed by a band of *Turdoides affinis*.

These sightings and those of Zacharias and Gaston (1993) and Prasad and Karthikeyan (1994) indicate that the Northern Goshawk is possibly a rare winter visitor to southern India.

July 24, 2002

S. THEJASWI<sup>1</sup>

639, 'Sibia House', 16<sup>th</sup> Cross,  
'B' Block, Vijayanagar III Stage,  
Mysore 570 017, Karnataka, India.

<sup>1</sup>Email: dumaketu@rediffmail.com

A. SHIVAPRAKASH

# 478, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cross Road, 8<sup>th</sup> Main Road,  
'H' Block, Ramakrishna Nagar,  
Mysore 570 022, Karnataka, India.

Email: adavanne2004@yahoo.com

## REFERENCES

- ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1987): Compact Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Pp. 233-234.
- DHARMAKUMARSINHI, K.S. (1954): Goshawk (*Astur gentilis*) in Bhavnagar (Saurashtra). *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 52(1): 211.
- INGALHALIKAR, SHRIKANT, TAEJ MUNDKUR & TEJAS GOLE (1988): The Goshawk, *Accipiter gentilis* (Linne) in Poona, Maharashtra. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 84(2): 434-435.
- KHACHAR, SHIVRAJKUMAR & TAEJ MUNDKUR (1990): Sightings of Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* in Hingolghadh, Gujarat. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 86(3): 446.
- PRASAD, J.N. & S. KARTHIKEYAN (1994): Eastern Goshawk in Bangalore. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 90(2): 288-289.
- ZACHARIAS, V.J. & A.J. GASTON (1993): The birds of Wynaad, southern India. *Forktail* 8 (February): 11-23.